

COLONEL BOB HOWARD

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS AWARDED FOR ACTIONS DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

United States Army
Sergeant First Class
Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 2018 (May 2, 1968)

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Sergeant First Class Robert Lewis Howard (ASN: RA-14628152), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Command and Control (Central), 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces. Sergeant First Class Howard distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 21 November 1967, as Special Forces Advisor to a joint American and Vietnamese reconnaissance patrol conducting a search mission near the Laotian border. His patrol discovered a huge rice and ammunition cache surrounded by an enemy bunker complex. Sergeant Howard led a small team to provide security while the remainder of the unit began to destroy the stored supplies. His team encountered four North Vietnamese Army soldiers, and Sergeant Howard killed them with a fierce burst of rifle fire. He and his men were immediately pinned down by a murderous curtain of fire which erupted from a nearby enemy machine gun position. With complete disregard for his safety, Sergeant Howard crawled toward the emplacement and killed a North Vietnamese sniper who was firing at him as he maneuvered. He then charged the bunker, eliminating its occupants with rifle fire. A second machine gun position unleashed a savage barrage. Sergeant Howard moved his troops to a covered location and directed an air strike against the fortified bunker. While assessing the bomb damage, Sergeant Howard was fired upon by North Vietnamese soldiers in the bunker who had survived the blasts. Pinned down directly outside the strongpoint with a blazing machine gun barrel only six inches above his head, he threw a hand grenade into the aperture of the emplacement, killing the gunners and temporarily silencing the weapon. He then dashed to his team's location and secured a light anti-tank weapon. As the enemy machine gun resumed firing, Sergeant Howard stood up amid a withering hail of bullets, fired his weapon, and completely demolished the position. His fearless and determined actions in close combat enabled the remainder of the patrol to destroy the enemy cache. Sergeant First Class Howard's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.